

CHRIST A SANCTUARY

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*“And he shall be for a sanctuary.”
Isaiah 8:14*

MANY of the Rabbis, and I think with good reason, refer this to the Messias. We refer it to Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, the Son of God, who is the Messias of God to our souls. We are, no doubt, justified in referring it to our Lord Jesus Christ, because Peter, speaking by the Holy Ghost, uses the next part of the verse in reference to Him. He declares that it was written that Jesus should be a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense. If, then, the latter part of the verse is by divine authority interpreted as belonging to Christ, we may be pretty sure that the former part of the verse requires the same construction.

So then, as a subject for our present meditation, we take the fact that Jesus Christ shall be for a sanctuary. He shall be for a sanctuary in three respects, upon each of which we shall speak with all possible simplicity.

First, Jesus shall be for a sanctuary—

I. IN WHICH WE, AS POOR GUILTY SINNERS, SHALL FIND A SHELTER.

A sanctuary was a place where a criminal who dared not appear before the tribunals of his country found a shelter. Such sanctuaries once abounded in England. Certain shrines which were considered sacred had this privilege or this curse—I do not know which it was—accorded to them, that whenever a criminal had fled to them he was beyond the arm of justice. There was such a sanctuary in Westminster, and another not far from this Tabernacle, but they were ultimately abolished.

Among the Jews the privilege of the sanctuary was kept in proper check, yet it was not forbidden. Certain cities were set apart to which man-slayers, who had accidentally slain anyone, might flee for security. We find also that among the Jews some hoped to find shelter in the precincts of the temple. Joab went to the altar, and laid hold upon the horns, and thought himself secure, though when Solomon sent and bade him come without, he said, “Nay, but I will die here,” so that the altar in those days was not a sanctuary. It was not till later times that it was unjustifiable to smite men when they had entered into holy places, and hence holy places and sanctuaries became places of refuge.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is a place of secure refuge for every soul that flies to Him. The moment a sinner believes in Jesus he is safe, and continuing to believe he remains safe in life, safe in death, safe in judgment, safe in eternity. The passing out of self-righteousness into confidence in Christ is the act that saves the soul. When your faith doth lay its hand upon the dear head of the Redeemer, what if I say upon the horns of the altar of His sacrifice, then is thy soul secure and nothing can destroy it.

Let us explain this mystery. Why is it that believing in Jesus makes the soul safe? It is because when God was angry with men and must needs smite men for their sins, Jesus interposed. The blows that ought to have fallen upon men fell upon the Savior. The debt which was due from the multitude of sinners to the great God, Jesus paid.

*“He bore that man might never bear
His Father’s righteous ire.”*

It will be manifest to you all that if Jesus Christ suffered thus in our stead, we shall not be called on to suffer the penalty He discharged. If Jesus paid our debts, they are cancelled, and we are in debt no longer. If Jesus Christ became our substitute and stood for us before God, then our warfare is accomplished, and henceforth the law can exact nothing at our hands.

Do you ask for whom did Jesus Christ thus shed His blood as a substitute, a representative? We answer, for as many as believe on His name. “For God so loved the world”—now, mark, here is the gauge, this is the test. I have heard people dwell on that word “so” as if it were something boundless and unqualified, without measure or limitation, but listen to the passage—“For God so loved the world”—so much and no more—“that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The work of Christ thus begins and ends with “*Whosoever believeth on him.*”

If you believe not, dying as you are, the death of Christ has nothing to do with you, except it be to plunge you into yet deeper despair. It is only to the man that believeth that the blood is applied. No other soul under heaven has any share in the merit of that glorious sacrifice, or shall be accepted thereby, but the man who believeth. But for every soul that believeth in Him, Jesus Christ has borne all the punishment that soul deserved to have borne. God cannot in justice punish that man, for He has punished Christ instead of him.

For every soul that believeth, Christ has drunk the cup of wrath to the very dregs. There is not a drop left in that bowl for anyone that believeth on Christ, for Christ has drained it. By Jesus the debts have all been discharged, He has not left one of them in the book of God’s record. Every soul that believeth is secure before the courts of heaven because Jesus stood for him. My main inquiry here must be, “Dost thou believe in Jesus?” I will put it in other words. To believe is to trust. Dost thou trust in Jesus? Dost thou rely upon Him? If so, then Jesus stood for thee.

Now do you see how Jesus Christ becomes a sanctuary? Just in this way. Because I fear God’s anger for my sin, by faith I put myself beneath the cross of Christ. There God’s anger fell upon the innocent victim. Divine justice was clear when it allowed the Holy One to be condemned and put to death. But that same justice demands a full release for those on whose behalf He mediated. Their faith furnishes the evidence of their freedom. *If God has punished Christ for my sin, He will not also punish me for it.* If Christ has paid my debt, then paid it is, nor will God, the Judge of all, bring the handwriting of ordinances which was once against me, to indict me for charges that have been fully satisfied.

Where is common equity if the Substitute should suffer, and then the man for whom the Substitute suffered should suffer again? Thus justice itself puts a canopy over the head of the ransomed sinner. When the fiery sleet of God’s wrath descends he smiles, because he has found a retreat, a sanctuary. The fury of the storm spent itself upon the great Substitute. He bore it all and the sinner escapes.

Oh! what a blessed truth! He who has never realized it for himself has never known the Gospel. I care not how high your professions, nor how great your boastings, nor to what church you belong, if you have not come to rest in the substitutionary work of Jesus Christ, you do not know the first letter of the Gospel alphabet. May the Lord, the Holy Spirit, teach you, for this is the Gospel of the grace of God which we declare unto you, knowing that we shall have to answer for our preaching at the last assize!

Mark, the Lord Jesus Christ in this way becomes a sanctuary to us *from all our deadly fears*. Who among us is not sometimes disturbed with the recollection of his past life? Surely it has not been as it ought to have been with us. What black spots does our memory conjure up! How much of our time has run to waste? Were you called to die now—and oh! how soon the summons will come, every week takes some of you away—in the solemn hour of death, would not your past life bring up dismal fears, deep regrets, and dark forebodings? What, then, would you do? Why, what should you do but—as you have done before—fall back upon this great truth that Jesus died for him that believeth, and trusting in Him, you would say—

*“A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On Thy kind arms I fall;*

*Be Thou my strength, my righteousness,
My Savior and my All."*

So might you lean your head back upon your pillow, and feel it sweet to die with confidence in Christ. Thus, beloved, from God's wrath and from our deadly fears, the Lord Jesus Christ becomes a sanctuary to those who trust Him.

A sanctuary He is likewise *from all our cares*. From anxiety and disquietude, who among us is exempt? In the midst of trials and troubles, be they in mind, body, or estate, from pain, poverty, or pressure of any kind, is it not a blessed thing to say—

*"His way was much rougher and darker than mine,
Did Christ, my Lord, suffer, and shall I repine?"*

The remembrance of what He endured for you becomes a sanctuary from dejection and despair. The Friend you trust will prove true. He will treat you tenderly, to whatever cause you trace your hardships.

Permit me to ask each and every one of you individually—Have you ever fled to this sanctuary? Can you answer "Yes." Then happy are you. Do go and tell others about it. Let not your tongue be silent. Let others know that there is a covert from the tempest, and a shelter from the rough wind, and that you have found and proved it. Be not afraid to speak. There is more reason to fear silence than speech with such a safeguard from sins, and snares, and sorrows. Publish it to the worst and vilest, if you meet with them, let your kinsfolk and acquaintances know that there is a safe sanctuary in Christ, and that you have tested its virtues and its validity.

The weight of your personal testimony may be blessed by God's Spirit to their conversion, at any rate, your duty to your fellow creatures and your devotion to your heavenly benefactor demand this grateful service. Or haply you may never have resorted to this sanctuary. Then be sure that your peril is fearful and your doom is imminent. Out of Christ there is no hope. He that believeth not on Him is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the Son of God.

At this present moment—and who can tell how critical the present moment may be—the wrath of God abideth on you. It rests on you, moral though you may be as a citizen, virtuous though you may be as a young man, or pure and affectionate as a young woman, seeing you have not believed. The one thing necessary is wanting. No plea you can offer is valid. You have put yourselves out of court. "The wicked shall be cast into hell, with all the nations that forget God." That is the category in which you place yourselves. You have forgotten God, you have neglected Christ, you have never reached a resting place.

Oh! listen. Do you not long for an asylum, a sanctuary, a safe retreat? Are you anxious to reach it? You may easily find it, as you run eagerly, you will read clearly. If you are really humbled and brought to know your want of a Savior, He is easy of access. Just give up all your doings, and cast yourselves into His arms. I have used this illustration before, but it will answer my purpose again. There is a boy in a burning house. He is clinging yonder to a window sill. If he falls to the ground, he will be dashed to pieces. But a strong man standing underneath cries, "Boy, drop, I will catch you," his hands let go and he falls safely into the arms that are stretched out to rescue him. That letting go is an act of faith, and he is saved thereby.

Such faith I would have you now exercise, let go of everything you have been clinging to, just drop into the Savior's arms, and on His sacred bosom you shall find rest. Depend on Him, and on Him alone. 'Tis all that is asked of you. Will you tell me that you are not fit? Did you ever hear of fitness in connection with a sanctuary? Why, the worst of thieves, and even murderers, were accustomed to fly to the sanctuary. So, however vile you may be, Christ sets the sanctuary of His atonement wide open before you, that you may go to it and find shelter.

*"Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;*

*All the fitness He requireth
Is to feel your need of Him;
This He gives you,
'Tis His Spirit's rising beam."*

Right joyful should I be if, by the Holy Spirit's power, I might persuade some of you to flee to Jesus, and depend alone upon Him. This would be the happiest day of your lives, the beginning of a new life.

Well do I recollect when I looked to my Lord and Master and found salvation in Him. Never can I forget the happy day when Jesus took my sins away. Most affectionately and earnestly do I entreat you to look to Him, so shall your eyes be enlightened. Depend on a crucified Savior, and you shall find peace and comfort to your souls.

Secondly, Jesus Christ is a sanctuary in the sense of—

II. A PLACE OF WORSHIP.

We often hear people talk nowadays of exclusively holy places. They will sometimes call some edifice, be it a parish church or a private chapel, a sanctuary. I take it that this is a mistaken use of the word if used exclusively. No one place is a bit more sacred than another. Those who would draw near to the Lord should remember that—

*"Where'er we seek Him, He is found,
And every place is hallowed ground."*

It is nothing but a relic of Judaism, or a result of Roman Catholic superstition, to suppose that there are specially holy places constructed of bricks and mortar, or consecrated stones. Your bedroom, where you bow the knee, may be as near the gate of heaven as the grand cathedral along whose vaulted roofs the music of song has resounded for centuries.

Jesus Christ, however, *is* a sanctuary. There is the holy place of His people's worship. Treasure that up. You may worship God anywhere if you get with Christ, but if you forget Christ, you can worship nowhere. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me," saith Christ. You can never have an acceptable worship of the Most High except through Jesus Christ. I will take you for a moment into that which was called the holy place under the old Jewish law, the holy of holies. What was there? Only two things which could be seen. The one was the golden censer, and the other was the mercy seat, and both of these things were instructive.

Now, beloved, when you go to the Lord to worship, the first thing you want is somebody to render your worship acceptable. See there, in the person of your Lord Jesus Christ, a golden censor, representing the sweet merit of His prevalent intercession by which you are accepted. When the High Priest went into the holy place, he filled this golden censer and waved it to and fro till the sweet perfumed smoke went up before the mercy seat.

That is just what Jesus does in heaven for us. We burn the incense here below, and the sweet perfume of His merit continually ascends before the throne of the Most High and Holy God, and beneath the cloud of smoke we worship. Jesus becomes a Sanctuary for us, and you can never worship God aright till you feel that Jesu's merits go with your worship. If your prayers are perfumed with the incense of your own merits, and you think they will be acceptable, you know not what you are doing, but if you see that golden censer, and look to God through the smoke of Jesu's merits, then do you really worship, and Christ thus becomes to you a sanctuary.

The other article of furniture in the holy of holies was the mercy seat—a square casket upon which were set cherubim with outstretched wings. It was before this mercy seat, perhaps, that all prayer had to be offered. There was only one place where Israel's gifts could really come up before God, and that was before the mercy seat. Now, beloved, when we go to God we cannot go directly to Him, we must go to the mercy seat first.

“I will have nothing to do with an absolute God,” said Luther, and he was quite right. We may not come unto God except through Jesus Christ. We look towards God in the person of His dear Son. God in the son of Mary, God in the man of Nazareth, God in the bleeding sufferer of Calvary—we look there, and we look through Jesus Christ up to the unseen, but ever-glorious Father, and with His merits before us, with His precious blood before our mind’s eye, we come to God through Jesus Christ, and we are accepted in the Beloved.

But, beloved, I am afraid that many Sundays, and many weekdays too, we try to worship God without Christ. It will never do, it cannot succeed. If ever you come out of your closet without the sense of having put the blood before God, you have had a lost season of retirement. If you ever go out of this Tabernacle feeling that in all the worship there has been no sense of Christ’s presence, no thoughts of His precious blood, that worship has been worthless, the time has been wasted. Without the incense of His merit, without the mercy seat of His substitutionary sacrifice, there is no sanctuary, there is no worship, there is no drawing near to God.

Inside the mercy seat, if you had been permitted to open the lid and to look in, you would have seen three things. First, you would have seen a golden pot of manna. Now communion is one of the sweetest portions of worship. Communion is set forth in Scripture by eating bread with one another. So the eating of manna with God is typical of communion, but we get no manna unless it comes out of the golden pot of Christ. I find no manna, except it is concealed beneath the mercy seat—no eating with God unless we come through Jesus Christ.

Do not, I beseech you, attempt to commune with God apart from a precious sense of a crucified Savior. It is at the cross’ foot that Jacob’s ladder stands, the top of whereof is in heaven. If you would see a covenant God, you must get the telescope of faith and stand at the foot of the cross and look, for you shall see God nowhere but in Jesus. You shall feed upon heavenly manna nowhere but as you feed upon Christ.

Another mode of worship is that of service, for to work for God is the best of service. Inside the ark there was Aaron’s rod that budded. What was that? It was Aaron’s symbol of work when he was called to work for God. Do you want to know whether you are called to work for God? Look for your Aaron’s rod in Christ. You will never have a rod that buds if you look away from the Lord to the visible church. The church may call you when you have no divine vocation. There are thousands of priests who have had bishops’ hands upon their hands, who are neither God’s ministers nor truly called to minister among men. But if you see your calling in Christ, if you get Aaron’s rod that budded, full of life and vigor, the Spirit of God will maintain you in your work. In your worship, then, and in your service, Christ must be your sanctuary.

One other thing was in the ark, and that was the tables of stone, the perfect tables of the unbroken law fairly written out. If you desire to have the law written in your hearts, if you desire to have perfect righteousness in keeping the law of God, you must not try to approach God for yourselves, but you must come through the Mediator, Jesus Christ. He who would offer to God a perfect obedience must take the imputed righteousness of the immaculate Son of God, and being arrayed in that, he shall worship God aright, Christ being a sanctuary for him.

I am very, very anxious that every believer here should draw a ring, as it were, around himself, and ask his heavenly Father for help, that he may draw nigh through the rent veil of the Savior’s pierced body and come spiritually, with heart, and soul, and strength, near to the throne of God, worshipping the Most High.

Our third point is that Jesus is a sanctuary in the sense of—

II. A DWELLING PLACE.

This is an unusual sense, perhaps, but it is a Scriptural one. “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. In the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon the rock.” The priest under the old law only went into the holy of holies once in the year, but every priest unto God—and you are all such who have believed—every priest unto

God goes in and never goes out again—at least, he never needs to go out. He may abide always in the holy place—a place where in the morning he sings his waking song, and a place wherein at night he sups with Christ.

The sanctuary was a place in which only one person ever dwelt, and that was God Himself. The mysterious light which they called the Shekinah shone from between the wings of the cherubim, there were the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night—the symbols of the divine presence. It was God's house. No man lived with Him, no man could. The High Priest went in but once a year, and out he went again to the solemn assembly.

But now, in Christ Jesus, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, we find a sanctuary to reside in, for we dwell in Him, we are one with Him. God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and as God was in Christ, so is it written, "You in me, and I in you." Such is the union between Christ and His people. Every believer is in Christ, even as God is in Christ. So Christ is the sanctuary where God and man may meet together and live in perpetual delight and solace.

My beloved, do you always dwell in Christ? I wish I did. I find it comparatively easy to get fellowship with Christ, but oh! it is so difficult to keep it up. When one climbs the mountain, gets one's forehead bathed in the sunlight, talks with God, and feels the world to be far below in the valley, one feels that it is good to be there, but ah! we are soon down again, mixing with the people, marrying and giving in marriage, we are fighting our battles, and buying and selling again! Oh! that we could have Peter's wish and build three tabernacles, for it is good to be there, where the transfigured Master reveals Himself to His delighted people.

Oh! that we could always live in the banqueting house and see that banner of love always floating over us! And let me tell you, we may do so. There have been some of the saints who have been helped to do it. They have been as much with God when they have been trading across the counter as when they have been bowing the knee, as much with Jesus in their daily toils as in their Sabbath rest. Why should it not be so with us? I covet, I covet beyond all luxuries, to walk with God. If I might have this, I would not ask for anything else beneath these skies.

*"Oh! that I might for ever sit
With Mary at the Master's feet
To hear His gracious voice!"*

Oh! that I might go into the door of His house and never find my way out. If we leave the table, it is not because the feast is over or the Master has dismissed the guests. Oh! never. Ye are not straitened in Him, but in yourselves. The deep bottomless sea of His precious love is all before you, if you thirst, it is because you will not drink. If you live in the cold Arctic regions, distant from Christ, it is not because the sunlight of His love could not warm and cheer you. If you would come into the equatorial regions of a simpler faith and a more abundant trustfulness, you might yet have all the luxuriance of a tropical heat sent into your souls.

Come up higher, brethren and sisters! From the lowest chambers come to the highest ones. From the Master's feet come to His bosom, and from His bosom come to His lips. From the outside court or tabernacle come to the court of the priests, and from the court of the priests come to the holiest of all. Advance! Come boldly! The Lord help you by His Spirit to come and dwell in the sanctuary! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

ROMANS 10:1-20

Verse 1. *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*

Now these people had persecuted the apostle. Wherever he went they had followed him up, they had hindered his work, they had sought his life, and yet this was the only return that he made to them—to desire and pray that they might be saved. Let us never be turned aside from this loving desire for those among whom we dwell. We wish them nothing worse—we cannot wish them anything better than that they may be saved. Let us not only desire it, but let us pray for it. Let us turn our desires into the more practical and holy form of intercession.

2. *For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*

Always make allowance for anything that is good in those who, as yet, are not converted. We must not be unjust with them because we desire to be faithful to them.

3. *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*

And that is the great mischief with persons who are not saved. They are very sincere, very earnest, but they will not submit to the righteousness of God, they will not agree to be made righteous by the grace of God through Jesus Christ, but they “go about”—that is the apostle’s word. It is very expressive of the energy men will put into it, and the shifts to which they will have recourse, in order to work out a righteousness of their own. They will go about, aye, even to the very gates of hell, they will try to climb up by prayers, even to the gates of heaven. They will go about to establish their own righteousness, but they do not know the righteousness of God, and they refuse to submit themselves to it.

4. *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

He that believes in Christ is as righteous as the law could have made him, if he had kept it perfectly. The end of the law is righteousness, that is, the fulfilling of it, and he that hath Christ will see the law fulfilled in Christ, and the righteousness of Christ applied to himself.

5-6. *For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise,—*

Ah! that is a very different sort of thing. It does not speak about doing and living, “but the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise.”

6-9. *Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

There is the Gospel in a nutshell. What a very simple way it is—to believe these great facts about the Lord Jesus Christ—really to believe them so that they became practical factors in your life. This is all the way of salvation. Christ has not to be fetched down. He has come. He has not to be fetched up. He has risen from the dead. The work is finished. What thou hast to do is to believe in that finished work and accept it as thine own, and thou shalt be saved.

10. *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

How different all this from that going about to establish our own righteousness, this setting up of prayers, and tears, and church goings, and chapel goings, and good works, and I know not what besides! Instead of that, here is Christ set forth, and “ye are complete in him.” If you take Him to be yours, you are “accepted in the Beloved,” and “being justified by faith, you have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Oh! what a blessing this is!

11. *For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

Though he did much that he need be ashamed of, yet when the law so brought him to believe in Jesus Christ for righteousness, he is righteous, and he is so righteous that he shall never be ashamed of his righteousness, nor ashamed of his faith in Christ. Would God that some who are going about after a righteousness of their own would be led to try this method, and believe in Jesus Christ.

12. *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek:*

What a blessed word that is—"There is no difference between the Jew and the Gentile"! There are some that want to keep up that difference. They say that we are Israel, or something of the kind. I do not care what we are. There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek.

12. *For the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.*

Someone said to me, "I think that the Romish church cannot be the church of Christ. I do not think that the Church of England is the church of Christ. Do you think the Baptists are the church of Christ?" And my answer was, "The church of Christ is to be found mixed up in all churches, and no churches at all." It is a people that God has chosen from among men, and they are to be found here and there and everywhere, a spiritual seed that God has marked out to be His own, and they are known by this—that they call upon the Lord, and "the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him."

13. *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

We call upon that name by having confidence in it, by speaking to God in prayer, using that name, by adoring and reverently proclaiming the majesty and the name of God. Whosoever shall call upon or invoke that great name shall be saved.

14. *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?*

For at the bottom of the saving invocation or call there must be real faith. There cannot be any true worship of God unless it be grounded and bottomed upon faith in God.

14. *And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?*

There cannot be such a thing as believing what has never been spoken in our hearing, and has never been made known to us. Of course, reading often answers the same end as hearing. It is a kind of hearing of the Word, but a man must know, or he cannot believe.

14. *And how shall they hear without a preacher?*

How is that possible? Do you see the machinery of the Gospel? There is the calling upon the name. That comes of faith. There is the faith that comes of hearing, but there is the hearing that comes of preaching. Now a little farther.

15. *And how shall they preach, except they be sent?*

Poor preaching. It will not be the kind of preaching that produces believing hearing, except they be sent. If God does not send the man, he had better have stopped at home. It is only as God sends him that God will bless him. He is bound to back up His own messenger when he delivers God's own message. "How shall they preach, except they be sent?"

15. *As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*

And they are so beautiful because, you see, God has put them at the root of everything. God makes the preacher whom He sends to be the source of so much good, or the channel of so much good, for by his preaching comes the hearing, and by the hearing comes the believing, and out of the believing comes the calling upon the name and the salvation.

16. *But they have not all obeyed the gospel.*

"But." A sorrowful "but" is this. Oh! this is the mischief of it. The Gospel, then, has an authority about it, or else the apostle would not speak of obeying the Gospel. Men are bound to believe what God declares to them, and their not believing is a disobedience. "They have not all obeyed the gospel."

16. *For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?*

As if there were so few that did believe it, that he had to ask who they were.

17. *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

You are wise, therefore, dear friend, if you are seeking salvation to be a hearer of the Word, but mind that it is the Word of God that you hear, because the word of man cannot save you. It may delude you. It may give you a false peace, but the hearing that saves is hearing which comes by the Word of God. Oh! take care, then, that you do not run hither and thither just because of the cleverness of certain speakers, but keep you to the Word of God whoever preaches it, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

18. *But I say, Have they not heard?*

These very people for whom the apostle prayed—have they not heard?

18. *Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.*

The preaching of the Gospel went forth amongst those Israelites, who rejected it. Wherever they went, the Gospel seemed to follow them like their shadows. They could not escape from it, but they did not believe it.

19. *But I say, Did not Israel know?*

Assuredly, Israel did know, but did not believe.

19. *First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.*

Moses told them that it would be so if they rejected Christ. Christ would be preached to the Gentiles, and those whom they thought to be foolish would come in and accept what they had rejected.

20. *But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.*

He told them, therefore, that God would save a people who hitherto had never sought after God—that He would send the Gospel to a people that were dead in sin, and had never asked to receive the light and life of God.

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